



## GEORGIA MOBILE DAY CARE PROGRAM

### Background/Overview

In order to allow caregivers in rural counties a period of respite from their 24 hour-a-day caregiving responsibilities for persons with dementia, a concept was formulated to establish a *mobile day care (MDC) program*. *Mobile day care enables rural communities to have their own day care program while “sharing” staff which will travel between locations.* Utilizing funds from the Administration on Aging’s (AoA) Alzheimer’s Demonstration Grants to the States program, the Greater Georgia Chapter Alzheimer’s Association developed the innovative concept, and the program was implemented by the Augusta Area Chapter Alzheimer’s Association, with technical assistance from the Central River Savannah Area (CSRA) Area Agency on Aging.

Though initially developed for caregivers of persons with Alzheimer’s Disease, mobile day care is a program which can serve other adults in need of day care, and is a service option which may be viable whether is serving a rural county or the borough of a large metropolitan area.

Though the term *mobile day care* conjures images of a facility that moves, it is actually the staff, along with materials and supplies needed for the day that are mobile. Leaving early each morning from a central location, day center staff travel to a rural site, transporting needed program materials with them. Space for these sites can be located in churches and senior centers. Depending on the needs of the community, each site is open for five to eight hours per day, one to three days each week. In the evenings, the staff travel back to a central location.

### Site Locations

Georgia currently has five mobile day care programs, with eleven sites. The Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging(AAA) provides funding to the Athens Community Council on Aging, Inc. which has five sites in Elberton, Greene, Morgan, Newton, and Walton Counties. The Southern Crescent Area Agency on Aging provides funding to the McIntosh Trail/ Mental Health/Developmentally Disabled/Addictive Diseases Community Service Board which operates sites in Butts and Upson Counties. Middle Georgia AAAA operates sites in Perry and Crawford Counties. Additional sites are operating in Jenkins and Liberty counties. A one-day a week mobile day care site in McDuffie County has now become a five-day a week program, and is described in more detail under the *Success Stories* section.

### Choosing the Community for a Mobile Day Care Site

When choosing a community in which to locate a mobile day care site, consider:

- distance your staff will have to travel
- distance from your central office as relates to supervision
- demographic information regarding prevalence rate of persons with Alzheimer’s Disease or other dementia (likely available through census data by county)
- community resources, including service providers, referral sources,
- ability to provide meals, ability to provide transportation,
- suitable facility
- if your agency is known in the community
- Potential collaborating organizations in the community

### **Staffing**

Staffing for Mobile Day Care programs are flexible, and will depend on the hours of operation, number of days per week each site operates, and the number of sites. A typical staffing pattern might include:

*Activity Director or Recreational Therapist*

*Aide*, that assists the *Activity Director*

*RN Supervisor*, that periodically visits the MDC sites, and may supervise other programs as well

*Case Management Coordinator* (hours vary). Experienced social worker that assesses clients for Day Center attendance, assists families with seeking other available community resources, and conducts reassessments.

*Community Development Coordinator (CDC)*. Responsibilities include public relations, trouble shooting for day center operations, and making local arrangements for educational programs. Also responsible for developing a coalition of community professionals and caregivers that will assist in promoting the mobile day care program.

*Executive Director and Administrative Assistant*- handle budget, payroll, and other tasks at central office.

### **Daily Activities**

Daily activities are the same as other social model day care programs, and may include some of the following:

Greeting, conversation, and beverages  
Cognitive exercises  
Chair exercises  
Table Games  
Reminiscing  
Lunch  
Solving Puzzles  
Walking  
Arts and Crafts  
Stories  
Cooking activity  
Gardening

### **Partnering with Senior Centers**

Six of Georgia's Mobile Day Care sites are operated in senior centers. The advantages are:

1) use of the center is a cost effective alternative to the traditional "bricks and mortar" facility dependent service since there are no construction costs 2) ability to purchase meals from senior center 3) encourages interaction with other senior in jointly conducted activities 4) helps solicit volunteer help 5) provides immediate credibility in the community, and 6) provides access to referrals for persons no longer appropriate to attend the senior center.

### **Building Awareness of your program**

Building awareness of your program is crucial. Local contacts might include senior centers, churches, bulk mailings, distribution of flyers at local stores, doctor's offices, pharmacies, and home health agencies, contacts with funeral homes, and participation in health fairs. Other ideas include media contacts such as newspapers (both human interest stories and paid ads), cable access channel, and radio. Displays in libraries, participation in educational conferences, and training of law enforcement personnel about

A.D. and available resources can also be useful. Satisfied caregivers will also publicize the program, and local fundraisers are an excellent means of publicizing the program.

### **Building trust and credibility**

Building trust and credibility can be facilitated by establishing a community coalition. A group of local community leaders can establish direction for the program, assisting in securing speaking engagements, publicity, and in making referrals. The three “Ds” you want involved are: 1) Doers 2) Donors, and 3) Door Openers. Diversity is essential on the coalition. Building trust can be accomplished by:

- using well-known community sites
- Establishing a community coalition
- partnering with local agencies
- hiring a local employee. While the majority of mobile day care staff do travel from site to site, it is advisable to have at least one staff member hired locally, such as the Community Development Coordinator, or the Aide.
- Providing support groups for family members

### **Strengths/Benefits**

Mobile Day Care benefits include: 1) enabling unserved areas to have respite services 2) staff costs are spread between two or more sites 3) its flexibility with part time and full time positions helps to retain qualified staff 4) the program builds trust in rural communities, becoming the precursor of full time day care programs, and 5) it is replicable in an urban or a rural setting.

### **Success Stories**

The Louisiana Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs has replicated the Mobile Day Care program, using the Georgia program as model. The program operates in two rural areas that previously were without day care or other respite services. The demand in response to the program and sustained enrollment demonstrates that the program can be successfully replicated in other states and regions.

The Central River Savannah Area Agency on Aging (CSRA AAA) developed the first Mobile Day Care programs in Georgia. CSRA AAA was instrumental in creating a McDuffie County site that has since become a permanent adult day care facility called *The Homeplace*, which is open five days per week, 8 hours per day, to provide needed respite to caregivers.

### **Dissemination and Recognition**

The Mobile Day Care Program was featured on the *Supporting Rural Family Caregivers* Satellite Broadcast in March, 2008, sponsored by the Department of Health & Human Services in partnership with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Administration on Aging. The Mobile Day Care program received Honorable Mention for the 2005 Award of Excellence in Program Innovation from the Archstone Foundation and the Gerontological Health Section of the American Public Health Association.

Mobile Day Care has been featured at a United States Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing; in *Older American Reports*; *Successful Farming Magazine* (rural health section); *Rural Healthy People 2010*, Volume 3, a best practices document funded by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and developed by Texas A & M University; *A New Look at Community-Based Respite Programs-Utilization, Satisfaction and Development*, a report from the U.S. Administration on Aging; *Family Elder Caregiving: The Grotta Report on Philanthropic Trends and Best Practice Models* from Fordham University; *Helping the Helpers*; *State-Supported Services for Family Caregivers*, The Public Policy Institute, Research Group of AARP. The program has been highlighted at a number of state and national conferences.

Georgia’s Community Care Service Program, a cost-effective alternative to nursing home placement for Medicaid eligible consumers that maintains the consumer at home, has added Mobile Day Care to its

array of services.

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